

**LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES**  
**SAFEGUARDING AND IMPROVEMENT SERVICE**

**Children's Rights Service: Annual Reports 2013-14**

**Executive Summary**

- (i) These reports outline the provision of children's rights support and advocacy in Leicestershire for children in care, care leavers and children and young people involved in the child protection conference process, between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.
- (ii) They highlight the context, purpose and aims for the service and identify strengths, challenges and areas for improvement including work plans for 2014-15.
- (iii) The service focuses on aiding children and young people's voices to be clearly heard, listened to and acted upon so that they are a central part of the planning for their safety, care, health and wellbeing and they contribute to the development and improvement of the services designed to meet their needs.
- (iv) Strengths
- Children and young people in Leicestershire are being empowered to have a voice in child protection conferences and there is now an increased level of active participation – they are reporting they feel heard and involved.
  - There is evidence of continuous improvement to some aspects of social work practice, as a direct result of feedback from children and young people.
  - The service has developed positive working relationships with partner agencies for the benefit of children and young people.
  - There is good oversight of and provision of support to young people in care placed out of county.
  - There are strong links and collaborative working with the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service that offers a strengthened challenge to ensure best outcomes for children and young people.
- (v) Challenges
- Increased attendance where appropriate of young people at their child protection conference.

- How to achieve clear influence on child protection planning and therefore outcomes from young people's participation.
- Capacity to respond effectively to continuing demand on the service as the numbers of children in care and remit for care leavers has continued to increase.
- Developing effective ways of increasing availability of advocacy and take up across younger age groups and those with additional needs.
- Developing a more systematic approach to collating information so that the messages from the work undertaken with children and young people can influence more effectively and consistently the services to them.

(vi) Areas for Improvement

- Better quality and timely handovers and transitions between teams and workers for children subject to child protection processes.
- Improved arrangements from child protection conferences for more timely feedback to children and young people.
- Increase the number of young people participating in their child protection conference and those willing to have an initial contact through collaborative working between social workers, partner agencies and CRO.
- For social work teams to improve communication and aid better understanding to children and families regarding the child protection process and conferences.
- The need for the Children's Rights Service to develop a robust evaluation process in order to review the impact and effectiveness the service is having for children and young people to determine how best it can support improved outcomes.
- Ensuring up to date information about the Children's Rights Service (CRS) is widely available, readily accessible for all children and young people and actively promoted.
- Improve accessibility and availability of suitable accommodation for care leavers and location of such in relation to e.g. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)
- Improved and timely work around preparation for independence and transitions into adulthood.



